

Informant: LMP-S43 & S44
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CH: That's a good book.

S43: Yes, it has a lot of good things. In my spare time, and I do have a lot of spare time, I read to pass the time, and I kind of memorize stuff. Nowadays, I really can't memorize stuff because of my condition.

MOJ: Ok, we're ready.

CH: You were talking about...

S43: The lectures in the book.

CH: Yes.

S43: I keep busy by reading them. I keep busy reading good things, not just any book. I try to remember stuff so that I can pass it along to others. We have belonged to different clubs, this club and that club, and so we have had the opportunity to entertain audiences, as well as entertain ourselves as the seniors that we are. We both put together presentations, or she will sing alone, and I help her out a little when I see that her voice is going. People get very happy. During every presentation, such as, "Dia De la Raza," in September, Mother's day, Father's day, and other annual events. We try to – well now I've laid off a bit due to my illness because I'm not very well. But, I try not to forget, even in the house. I repeat stuff.

S44: Her mind is still good, mine isn't.

S43: I repeat things, so that I do not forget them.

CH: It's really good for your mind.

S43: For the memory, it's true. So, she goes more often. She hasn't stopped going.

S44: It's entertaining for me.

S43: It is entertaining for her. Since she is a senior, she has a tendency to forget some things. I'm a little younger than she is so I try to retain a little bit more.

S44: The suffering that I've had to go through has been hard. ¿?????????????????

S43: There's a minor difference as far as our minds. Getting into the medicinal stuff, like I was telling you, we're in *tempate*, that is in our land. That is *tempate, el acapate*,

siguapate, these are all ancient names that were used, I imagine, during the times before the Spaniards, the conquistadors came to the lands of the Orient, to my land San Salvador.

CH: Pre-Columbian.

S43: Pre-Columbian, exactly, that is the term. All of these names of medicines, I remember that my mom treated us with these medicines. If we had fire in the tongue (*fuego en la lengua*) because we had burnt our tongue with something hot that we had eaten, or if it was too warm and as a result our tongue would hurt.

S44: Sometimes you can get fire in the tongue (*fuego en la lengua*).

S43: My mom used to wash the leaves and put them in a little bit of water. She would tear them into smaller pieces, and then she would strain them. She would give us this water to rinse our mouth with. We would rinse our mouth, and after two hours we were cured of that. Now, these things are slowly being forgotten. But, we should conserve our roots. The conservation of the roots of the place of one's origin is a principle thing. It should not be left to die.

CH: What are the leaves that you have just mentioned?

S43: They are called (*tempate*).

CH: *Tempate*, are the leaves your mother gave you for fire (fuego).

S43: Yes, (*tempate*). There was also another kind called (*el acapate*). But, (*acapate*) was also good for eating.

S44: To make soup.

S43: You could add it to soup, so delicious-the smell and the flavor.

S44: Delicious.

CH: What does the plant look like?

S43: It is a short plant with long leaves with surrogated edges all around.

S44: It tastes like what they use to make the chimoles in Mexico, the cilantro. It's the same smell when it's done.

CH: When it's all done.

S43: For beef soup, you use the big pieces of meat with the bone, and the spices. The spices as we know them are (*el acapate*), (*el cilantro*), tomato-onion (*el tomate cebolla*),

and parsley (*perejil*), all of these fragrant herbs. They are so delicious and they are so good for the stomach.

S44: Yes, they are not harmful.

S43: They help to settle your stomach. It doesn't cause nausea, and it doesn't make you go to the bathroom a lot. They are very useful and it's good to keep them in mind so that you can pass them along to someone that merits them or wants them.

CH: That is the (*acapate*) plant?

S43: That is the (*acapate*), and the (*tempate*) are two things I've already told you about.

S44: I don't remember what (*tempate*) looks like anymore.

S43: (*El Siquapate*) was another one. It can be given to children for the stomachache maybe because the milk didn't agree with the stomachache, or maybe because the child ate too much, or any other reason. You can make some (*siquapate*) water by washing the *siquapate* leaf well, and then tearing it into small pieces, and draining it. You can give this to the child with a spoon. Adults can also take this. It works for grownups too. It makes stomachaches go away.

CH: With the *siquapate*?

S43: Yes, with the *siquapate*.

CH: Was it just one leaf that you prepared?

S43: About two or three leaves as not too exceed the amount given. One could give this to the child about twice or three times a day. Adults can take it too if one has a stomachache. Generally, the children are the ones that suffer from stomachaches. They used to give it to us with a spoon. There are all kinds of plants. This book has made me remember my mother. Those were the good old times. My mother used to give us all these things. How can I not remember all of those beautiful moments that were so full of truth? When I take things with chemicals it is because the doctor says I really need to take them. If I have something, I take it, and I say to the Lord, I have a lot of faith in God, I say, Oh God I am going to take this and if it is good for me, I'll keep taking it. You tell me if yes or no. I have so much faith that I pay attention to what God tells me. I have faith in what sits well with me. When God doesn't want me to take something, it is manifested in that I get sick after I take it. I can feel it as an ache in my chest, or my head. This is how I know if the thing is not good for me, and I will put that thing aside. I take what I feel goes well with me.

CH: Can you get those plants here, like (*el acapato*)?

S44: That one isn't found here.

S43: I don't remember what it is called English, but I have seen (***el acapate***) at the farmer's market in Santa Monica, at the market place that sets up on Saturdays.

S43: Saturdays and Sundays.

CH: El ***acapate***?

S43: Yes, on Wednesdays too.

S44: Here, they tell you the name in English but I don't know English. In English I am mute.

S43: ***Epazote*** is something you guys have in Mexico. There is a lot of (epazote) in Mexico. It is used a lot for cooking. We used it in the same way that we used the other plants I talked to you about.

CH: As a remedy.

S43: Yes, as a remedy for the stomach. The Mexican people use it for cooking, in cooked foods, and many times I have wanted to taste this, and I did. The food is very delicious.

CH: Is it a vine?

S43: No, it is a small plant.

CH: Ok.

S44: Here it grows on a small stem.

CH: Which one?

S43: ***El epazote***.

S44: It is good for expelling parasites. Generally, children are the ones that get parasites. You can make orchata, strain it of coarse, and then you can give it to children, and adults can take it as well. It keeps very well.

CH: It expels parasites?

S44: It expels parasites. Generally the children are more predisposed to getting parasites because they pick up stuff with their dirty little hands and put these things in their mouth. As elders, we are very careful that the children wash their hands. We watch out for what the children eat. We make sure that if the children drop their food on the ground they do not pick it back up and put it in their mouth. We have to be careful with the foods that

are consumed as well as taking them properly as a means of avoiding contamination. For example, if I am taking some medication and flies or dust has contaminated it, and I get sick, my sickness might be due to the contamination of the medicine and not the medicine itself. That is how it is.

CH: When you talk about preparing horchata out of the leaves, can you explain how it is prepared? How many leaves and water is used?

S44: Well, very little, not too much. You can use a cup-I don't know exactly how many ounces...

MHP: A regular cup?

S44: Yes, a regular cup.

CH: Ok, about eight ounces.

MHP: Eight ounces?

S44: We could say eight ounces. You have to wash the leaves very well. Nowadays we have blenders, so you can use a blender and then strain it to get any branch pieces out. You can give this to children or take it yourself if you need it. This is how it is done. In the past, we use to prepare it on a mortar (molcajete). We would grind it in the mortar and then scoop it out with a wooden spoon. My mother used to have wooden spoons made out of gourd (jicara). Do you know what a jicara is?

CH: Yes, my mother has one.

S44: No? What is it called?

S43: They make rattles (maracas) out of it. Out of the gourd comes squash and (*ayotes*). Cars are made out of pumpkin (*ayotes*).

MHP: Gourd?

CH: Yes.

S43: We know it as "bone pumpkin" (*ayote de hueso*).

S44: All these plants that I have mentioned are all used in the same manner –(*la epasina*), basil (*la albahaca*), all of that. You can cook it with your food and it is very delicious and it is very medicinal. I'm used to using these plants and I rarely get sick from my stomach but that is because I had so many horchatas that my mom would give me. I loved for my mother to give me these remedies. She was the oldest, so she could probably tell you more about my mother, or about the kinds of things that were used back then. We had (*epasina*) and the (*ocote*), (*tuna*), (*piguilote*), (*zapuyulu*), (*pitayo*), and the

colored water. We used to call it colored water because there was a lady that gave it that name but the proper name is **(taray)**, taray water. It is a piece of bark. This bark is cut into small, thin pieces and it is good for the kidneys. You can cut a thin piece and put it in a bowl of water, and this will give off a color that changes like a chameleon. It changes colors. When the water starts turning colors then this is when you take the water. You can take this water daily, twice, or three times a day. If your kidneys are not well, like if they are inflamed, or they are too dry, this will help you to release the urine. Generally, when people's kidneys are not well, they might not be able to urinate when they need to go. This is **(taray)**.

S43: It looks like **(ocote)** but it isn't.

S44: It looks like **(ocote)** but it isn't **(ocote)**. **Ocote** has a smell. It smells like resin (brea).

S43: You cut it into small pieces and put it in a liter of water.

S44: You put it in a liter of water. You cut a thin, long piece off with a knife and you put this in a bowl with water. When this water is finished, you put more water in, and you keep filling it with water until the bark stops tinting the water. It is marvelous for the kidneys.

CH: Do you add sugar?

S44: No, no, no, nothing, you just take it as a regular drinking water. If you are going to give it to a child and they have a hard time taking these remedies then you can add a little bit of sugar, just enough to fool them into taking it.

¿??: It doesn't have an odor, or a particular taste.

S43: Is it bitter or sweet?

S44: It's simple.

¿??: It's a tree.

MHP: How thick is the trunk of the tree?

S43: Taray.

¿??: That I don't know.

S44: You can't find it here. We bring this from El Salvador.

S43: It's only found over there. There are also lots of fruits over there that are also very medicinal.

¿??: When someone comes from El Salvador, they bring some over. We ask them to bring this stuff.

CH: Candelaria told me that sometimes she brings you this one plant.

S43: **Quina**.

S44: **Quina**.

S43: **Quina** is good for healing wounds. You can cut a piece of bark from the tree and you can boil it until it turns really red. Then, you can use this as (**fomentos**). It reduces swelling and it dries up wounds. If there is any bleeding from the wound you can use **Quina** powder. In El Salvador they sell it in its powder form made from the Quina tree. My teeth are not in good shape. My bottom teeth are just pieces of teeth. They are my first teeth and I never got new teeth. My dentures can't stay in place because my tooth pieces do not hold them up. But I use **Quina** so I don't have bad breath and I can be around people and talk. **Quina** prevents me from developing an infection in my gums or bad breath. When I am in pain, and there are times that I can't stand it, I use a tree that I don't know what it is called here. It grows everywhere and it grows really big. It has small, white flowers. I take this, mash it, and place it in water. I use this as mouth rinse and the pain goes away.

CH: You use the flower?

S43: No, I use the leaves.

CH: Oh, you use the leaves.

S43: A friend of mine gave me a piece, and I planted it. It is very useful for me. It's small still because it is still in a pot. I am happy preparing my dental rinse with **Quina** powder. **Quina** powder is hard to find. You can find it in San Salvador in places that sell spices. They wash it, dry it, and grind it, and then they sell it. I'm not sure how much a small bag of Quina powder goes for today since everybody knows about it. Older folks introduce Quina to their kids and their grandkids. People that habitually use Quina have white teeth because it removes stains from the enamel, and it is good for the gums. I used to ask this one lady, Mrs. Rosita how old she was. She told me she was 52 years old, and her teeth were so nice. She told me it was due to the **Quina**. She taught me that **Quina** was good for teeth, for wounds, and for whatever infection. The wound is washed well, and then the **Quina** powder is placed on the wound after the bleeding stops.

S44: This is the plant that is good for chewing when there is a toothache.

S43: I wash it first, and then I grind it, but I don't know what it is called.

MHP: It is called Jade in English.

CH: Jade.

S43: Oh, well then that is it. You have to wash the leaf very well. I grind it with the utensil I use to mash the beans because the blender gets on my nerves. After I grind it I place it in water. I do not boil it. I rinse my teeth with this. If I'm on the street and I get the pain I grab a leaf, I wash it and I use it.

S44: Exactly. It's even better that way.

HPB: But you don't swallow the saliva?

S43: Yes, of course, you do not swallow the saliva. You spit it out.

S44: You take a leaf and you wash it very well with tap water. If your gums are bothering you or you have a toothache what you do is you bite on the leaf as if it were gum. You spit out the saliva and when you are done you spit out the chewed up leaf.

HPB: This is good for toothaches?

S44: In about two to three minutes your pain is gone.

S43: If you go to the dentist they'll take your tooth out, and they might even take out the wrong tooth out, the one that is not in pain, and you end up treating the bad tooth at home. That's what dentists do.

S43: This is rosemary (**romero**). Rosemary is well known.

CH: My mother gave us rosemary baths.

S44: It makes hair smell really good.

CH: I love it.

S43: Rosemary (**romero**) is good for cooking foods. I put it in a bottle of alcohol with rue (**ruda**) and you let it sit for one or two weeks. After the second week, the alcohol turns a very dark color and its very aromatic.

S44: This is good for alleviating any kind of pain.

S43: You can rub some of this alcohol in the area where you have pain and the pain goes away quickly.

CH: How much rosemary (**romero**) do you use?

S43: You can use three rosemary leaves and three rue leaves.

S44: The Chinese use it for good luck. This is another kind. Oh you must let me have this one.

S43: That is the medication that we are talking about. These two things are placed in the alcohol and it is magnificent.

S44: Rue is good for earaches. When you have an earache you can put rue in a small amount of oil that has been warmed up so that it softens up the rue. Then, you put a small piece on a cotton ball and you use that. It takes away the ringing in a person's ear, earaches, trapped air, or hard of hearing due to air that is trapped. I go out a lot and when I do not cover myself, the next day I have to get some rue to make some plugs for my ears. I always keep myself covered and that is why everyone calls me grandma. Whether I am out in the street or here I am always covered. I'm uncovered now because the headscarf that I brought is too big and it bothers me. Rue is very good for ear or stomach pain. Some people ask me for rue and others they just steal it, it is believed that it is good luck.

S43: I am more interested in the medicine value not so much for good luck.

S44: The Chinese use rosemary for good luck. They always have rosemary bushes that they keep.

CH: Yes, I think my mother has told me about that.

S44: Yes, well there are some people that believe in that. I believe in God and Holy Mary. When I go out on a fieldtrip and I gamble and I don't win, I just figure that it is my luck.

S43: Moving on to another healing herb, there is (*tiguilote*), (*sapuyulo*), and (*pitaya*). Are you familiar with *pitaya*? It is the fruit that grows from the nopal.

S44: In Mexico they call them tunas. They are red.

¿??: Oh, we call them pitayas but here they are known as tuna. The fruit of the cactus (nopal) is called tuna.

S44: Exactly.

S43: In the book it is called pitaya.

MHP: Does it have a medicinal value?

S44: Yes, it is very medicinal. It is good for the stomach, and it is good for infections. You can make infusions. If the juice has medicinal value then one should drink it, right?

¿??: The stuff that comes out of the nopal is magnificent.

S43: It is good for everything. That is why so many people eat cactus (**nopal**). It is also good for the stomach.

S44: Putting the pitaya aside let me move on to the (**sapuyulo**). **Sapuyulo** is the seed of the (**sapote**). We call it sapote but you guys...

¿??: In Mexico it is known as mamey.

S44: Mamey, exactly.

¿??: In Mexico it is known as mamey but we in El Salvador know it as (sapote).

S44: The fruit is very delicious and we eat it. The seed has a very hard shell that is shiny. A person has to break open the fruit to get it out of its shell. The fruit can be mashed and can be fried in oil. When it is all fried it smells very nice and it is very good for the hair.

S43: It generates hair growth.

S44: If you have very little hair you will grow more hair.

MHP: Please give me the formula because I need it.

S43: I no longer use anything for my hair because at my age I can't stand anything that is sticky.

S44: I lost all of my hair. I was completely bald and as of about three months ago I got my hair back. I spent a year without hair and my daughter bought me (**shampu de sapuyulo**) sapuyulo shampoo and I started using it and up to this date I have continued to use it and look at my hair now. My hair has grown out and I have quite a bit of hair now, and this has really made me feel better because I was really depressed. I was not eating or sleeping because I was upset over losing my hair. I wanted my hair back.

S43: She didn't have a boyfriend either at her age (laughs).

S44: I was able to get my hair back and I keep using that shampoo. See my hair how nice it came back out.

CH: Yes.

S44: This is the seed of the (**sapuyulo**)

CH: Where do you find that shampoo?

S43: They sell it here.

¿??: You can find it at the swap meets.

S43: Yes, at the swap meets.

S44: At the Camaguey.

¿??: You can also find it at health food stores, places where they sell natural products.

S44: At the Camaguey. It is a Cuban store.

¿??: It is here on Venice, in Culver City. That is where you can find it. You can get shampoo or oil.

S43: Oil? I guess the young people can use it and have beautiful hair. I can't stand that kind of stuff on my head.

¿??: Your hair will grow very rapidly.

S43: Yes.

CH: You have really long and pretty hair.

S43: No! This is a hairpiece that I use so that it looks like I have hair because I don't have much hair.

S44: We also have Aloe Vera, which is very good. It is magnificent for treating asthma. It is good for treating inflammations due to bruises. What you do is you cut a piece of aloe vera and then you cut this piece in half so that the sticky side is exposed and this is what you rub into the area of the bruise or where you have pain. Many people do not have faith but if you have faith it will work well. Before, the children used to get the mumps that is very contagious so the person affected is isolated from others. Aloe Vera is very good for this when used warm on the area. This reduces the swelling. When healing you have to be very patient and have faith in God. Plants were made by God and have been blessed from the beginning of the creation of the world. The principal thing is to have faith- faith in God and faith in what God has placed here for us to discover.

S43: Where we are from, poor people didn't go to doctors because well - they always charge. In the small towns doctors do not charge as much. If a person is very humble and poor the workers themselves might go to their boss who might even be a doctor and they would not be charged. But here, well at our age, we are thankful to God because everything is paid by Medical but there are others who can't go to the doctor because it is costly. The medicine they are given might even make them sick because it might take care of one thing but worsen another thing. I'm afraid of going to the doctor.

MHP: Did you cure Cynthia with plants?

S43: Oh yes, I've treated my daughter many times and If she was ever ill again and I had the means I would treat her still.

¿??: I have alcohol infused with rosemary and rue. I suffer from rheumatoid arthritis.

MHP: Yes you told me about that.

¿??: I treat myself with this stuff.

CH: Does this cure you?

¿??: It alleviates my condition but rheumatoid arthritis cannot be cured it can only be alleviated. Like my mother says you have to have faith. Having faith is what counts.

S43: What do you say we leave the talk of medicine and take a break so that we can sing you the song, "El Canto a la Raza?"

MHP: Ok.

S43: Chelo, do you remember, "El Canto a la Raza?"

S44: I don't remember -

S43 & S44: (SING SONG)

S43: What do you think? That was "El Canto a la Raza." This song is used on October the twelfth. It is by Fransisco Lara and is used in the folklore of El Salvador.

CH: Aha, I have one of his books.

S44: Oooooooooo, I used to have one but in moving from one place to another I lost everything that I had of Fransisco Lara.

S43: Under the title of songs, you will find that song we just sang. You will also find, "El Carbonero." There is also, "Las Cortadoras," "Las Poblanitas," "Las Campesinas," all used on October the twelfth.

S44: Lets sing, "Las Campesinas."

S43 & S44: (SING SONG)

S43: That was, "Las Campesinas."

S44: In the past, if someone married a countrywoman and if she was found to have deceived her husband, she would then be dragged by the horse's tail all the way to her parent's home. Yes, it is true, she would be dragged.

CH: Really?

S44: Oh yes, that would really happen over there. Due to my age, I never witnessed that but my mother would tell us about that and it was true.

S43: These are folk songs that we learned in school and we would perform them on October the 12th, the 5th of November –

S44: The song, “El Carbonero,” is a song about how they cut the wood and make the coal. It goes like this...

S43 & S44: (SING SONG)

S44: Back then they didn't sell coal (carbon). People would cut their own firewood and they would make their own coal. My mother used to save coal to use for ironing. Back then we ironed with coal irons.

S43: It was a very small iron. The iron was placed on iron cooking ware .

S44: The poor people that didn't have iron-cooking ware would just place it near the fire and that is how they would iron. It was good that my mother treated me with an iron and I was able to leave the hospital where they were going to operate on me. When I had my second child, he did not want to breastfeed. He only wanted to feed from one and rejected the other so I developed a big ball here. When I went to the hospital the doctor told me that I needed an operation. This happened in my country, in San Salvador.

CH: Yes.

S44: I told my mother that I was going to be operated on because of the ball that I had developed. She said to me, that is just coagulated milk that you have because your kid doesn't want to drink your milk. Well, there was a doctor that was the daughter of Americans, and she was the one that was going to operate me. I was in the hospital and my child was about 4 months. They prepared me with anesthesia and the nurse told me that the doctor would be coming in soon. She told me that the doctor would be in within an hour to give the anesthesia time to kick in. I looked at the clock and an hour had already passed. I was bored of being in bed. After the second hour had passed I said, I'm leaving, and I put my dress back on. My mother asked me if they had already operated me and I said no, they gave me anesthesia but I left walking. Where we are from buses are called “camionetas.” I didn't even take a “camioneta,” I walked home. My mother said, don't worry I'm going to cure you with a little iron.

S43: They call them hand irons and you have to pick them up with a piece of cloth.

S44: My mother warmed up the iron and asked me if I could stand it and I said yes. My mother then started and said to me do you see how it is coming out. My mother used to save the chicken feathers, and so she took a feather and wet it with alcohol and that was it. In one week my mother had cured me and I didn't have to go back to the hospital.

S43: She was treated with a hand iron.

¿??: The milk was extracted from her breast.

S43: Yes, through massage with the iron.

MHP: Is the iron used hot?

S43: No, it is used cold. You wouldn't be able to stand it if it was hot.

S44: Where I am from, in countries like mine it is easier for people to cure themselves and don't have to go to the doctor or be hospitalized. Here people are often hospitalized. Some people are there to be treated for one thing and other people are there to be treated for something else but in hospitals the nurses sometimes are not careful about reading and making sure that they are giving the patient the right medication. They might give someone a shot that was supposed to be for someone else. This is why I prefer to treat myself with my plants. I have had an infection three times. The doctors have told me that my large and small intestine are not working. If this is true how is it that I am alive? I caught an infection due to having a vegetable soup. I sort of chewed on the vegetables. There were some Americans and I was embarrassed so I just ate the vegetables. This is how I caught the infection, and I have had it three times. I called for an ambulance. I passed out on the floor. I got up however I could - this was the second time I caught the infection.

MHP: Yes.

S44: I said to God, please forgive my sins. Only you know how many they are. I fell asleep and in the morning I said my Father I am alive. I didn't want to go to the doctor. I've caught that infection three times and I've treated it with (*omotil*) and something else that I buy, and my plants. I have treated my stomach with plants that I cook.

S43: Spearmint (*hierba buena*) leaves.

S44: Spearmint is great for the stomach. *Epazote* is also very good.

MHP: You have to know what plant to use.

S43: That is right, you have to have that knowledge.

S44: You have to know about the plant. If you go out and get and use a plant that is not the right one, then it is the same as if you were to go out and get the wrong medication.

You get the wrong chemicals in your body and this can worsen you instead of making you better.

MHP: These plants over here are used for medicinal purposes?

¿??: All of this is medicine.

S44: Yes.

MHP: They are from your garden?

S44: Yes.

¿??: We have all of these in the garden.

S44: The avocado pit (***hueso de aguacate***) is so good for pain but you have to mash it up really good. First you have to peel it. Then you add rosemary (***romero***), rue (***ruda***), camphor (***alcanfor***), and pure alcohol. You also take 4 to 6 aspirin and put it in the alcohol. After two to three days of using this regardless of how bad the pain is it will go away. The avocado seed (***semilla de aguacate***) is great. I wonder if sometimes the avocado pit is used as a substitute for quina powder because the avocado pit is very bitter. I have tasted it. It is also red so it is easy to fool people. Yes, I'm telling you it happens. My favorite herbs for cooking are spearmint (***hierba buena***), garlic, and cilantro. I have to peel the tomatoes before using them, that is if I am going to eat them raw. When I boil the tomatoes I just peel them and I can eat them without getting sick. For three years now I haven't had a recurrence of the infection. Thank God.

CH: The infection you had?

S44: Yes, I've had it three times. It's called gastroenteritis. Back home the indigenous people don't know and so young children die because they are not treated. One day there was an indigenous woman whose child was sick and so she took the child to the hospital. The doctor told the lady that the child was very ill and that the child could die over night. The woman asked the doctor about the condition of her child? The doctor told her that the diagnosis would come in tomorrow. The husband of the woman then came in and asked his wife for the child. She tells him that she had to bring the child to the hospital because he couldn't hold anything in and she didn't have anything to wipe the child with anymore. The child was already hospitalized. The indigenous man said to his wife, be careful Maria because if the child dies you are going to pay dearly with this machete. Indigenous people from back home are very delicate. The next day the indigenous couple goes back to the doctor and asks the doctor how the child is. The indigenous man says to the doctor, yes we are here to see how our child is after he was treated with the medication that you gave him. The doctor then says, well Jose, I have to tell you something that is going to be very disturbing. Back home indigenous people are tough. So then the indigenous man says, what happened doctor? What is wrong with my child? The doctor then starts to read his information sheet and says, your child passed away two

hours after you brought him in. He turns to Maria and tells her that the child was in grave condition when she brought him in. Your child died of gastroenteritis. That is the infection your child had. Based on this diagnosis your child had gastroenteritis. The indigenous man then turns to his wife and tells her that upon arriving home he would kill her and accuses her of killing the child. Maria then pleads with her husband but her husband is angry and tells her, didn't you hear what the doctor said? The child died from eating a whole cat with a uniform, didn't you hear?

Audience: Laughs

S44: The doctor had told him the child had died from gastroenteritis and that this was on the inform sheet (note that in Spanish this sentence literally sounds like: whole cat in a uniform). That was a story about the indigenous.

S43: Yes, ask me. I thought you were going to ask me a question.

MHP: I wanted to ask you about a plant called (sounds like: **huacao**)?

S43: I have my doubts about that one but I imagine that it is cacao.

S44: That's probably what it is.

S43: **Cacao** is very medicinal. It might be cacao or carao.

S44: Yes both carao and cacao sound similar.

S43: huacao...

MHP: We can go outside whenever you are ready.

S43: Yes, whenever.

MHP: We can go in their backyard and see some of their plants.

S44: It's probably the cacao tree because the cacao comes from big seeds. I remember that I used to eat the inside part and the shells were used for (fomentos).

CH: What were some of the most common illnesses that you treated in El Salvador.

S43: The most common were stomach infections, mumps (paperas) and tonsils (amigdalas), and influenza (gripe). Influenza (gripe) is always the most common because of the dust. One goes out and one has to breath, and well you can't really walk around all covered up as if there was an ash shower going on. One has to be out in the open air.

MHP: You know what, you didn't show us this one. What is this?

S43: It's linseed (**linaza**). It is very good for relieving inflammation.

S44: You can also drink linseed (**linaza**).

S43: It is also very good for healing the liver.

¿??: They are small seeds. You boil them.

S44: Get closer so that you can see them.

¿??: You take about two spoonfuls in a pot with a liter of water and let it come to a boil. You drink this as regular drinking water throughout the day. It is very good for relieving inflammation.

S43: It relieves any kind of inflammation.

S44: It is a very small seed.

MHP: What is the name of that plant?

S43: Linseed (**linaza**). You can't find it here. I have never seen it here.

S44: It is also very good for the stomach. It is good for relieving inflammation from the liver. It is also good for sleeping and for better digestion of your food. If you have a stomachache you can have some linseed tea and that will be good for you.

¿??: This is good for cough.

S44: What is it?

¿??: Elder tree (**Sauco**).

S44: Oh, yes elder tree (sauco). You have to boil that.

¿??: You can use this when you are coughing a lot. You bring it to a boil in water and you drink it as regular drinking water. It is good for the respiratory system. Oregano is good for stomach gas.

MHP: Do you use fresh oregano or dry?

S43: Here you can get it dry. People that use it fresh usually plant it at home like back home, not here. There is one kind of oregano that is primarily used for cooking.

S44: It is also used in salads. What is used is something we call foreign oregano (**oregano extranjero**) back home. My mother used to get a ¿??. A thick one. She used

to grate it and add onion, vinegar, and some oil, and we would have our salad to go with our meat dish.

¿??: Are you familiar with (**boldo**)?

MHP: The name sounds familiar but I do not remember what it looks like.

¿??: When you have gone out to eat and you feel that it has not set well with your stomach –

MHP: Like indigestion.

S44: Yes, indigestion.

¿??: You can make boldo tea and it is a saintly remedy. It's a proven fact for me that pork meat does not go with me. But sometimes I do cook pork meat. I can feel that it is going to make me sick so I drink some boldo tea after I eat it, especially after dinner. Boldo is very good for me.

S43: Do they sell it in small bags?

¿??: Yes.

S43: Well, I'm going to have to buy it. I need it for my stomach. When I go out I hardly eat anything even if they give a lunch.

MHP: Do you eat at the Senior Center?

S43: No, no, well sometimes I do but I eat whatever I feel my stomach is going to be able to digest.

MHP: Do they serve food every two weeks?

S43: Yes.

MHP: Do you go?

S44: No, for the last two years I have not gone. I don't feel well enough to go.

MHP: Are you already tired? Because we can come back another day?

S44: No, it isn't a problem at all. I don't go out because I get a little afraid and if I am with my daughter I feel safe. If I eat something and I get sick, my daughter immediately knows what to do or can take me to the hospital. If I go to one of those clubs who is going to be able to help me? We are all old folks there (laughs).

S43: Back home when a person gets the feeling of (ligo zero) in the mouth, the person can use the (*tiguilote*) fruit. I used to love that fruit when I was a little girl. My mother used to tell me, stop eating that Graciela, you're going to die! I used to answer, this is good for me and I would continue eating. Here, you can't find that fruit. Tamarind (*tamarindo*) is also very good. I buy my herbs wherever I see them.

MHP: There is a new supermarket near Venice.

S44: It's a very good supermarket.

¿??: Is it the Ninety-nine Ranch?

MHP: No, well maybe it is.

S44: No, the name is, MarVista Ranch.

MHP: Yes, it is the MarVista Ranch. It is right by my house.

¿??: When they were little girls they used to compete on radio shows. Back then there was no television.

S44: One radio station was called GSP, the other was the GSR. I was about nine years old.

MHP: They sang on the radio-she and her sister.

S44: Way back but we used to have an aunt who was a real puritan, that is to say she was really conservative. She started telling my mother not to let us girls go to the radio shows because we might get too popular. Well my mother stopped letting us go. My mother listened to her because my aunt was her older sister. Back then, a person had to respect their older siblings. My aunt was a very rigid person and gave us a lot of discipline. This is why I am the way I am. I like discipline and I do not like disorder.

MHP: What kind of songs did you sing?

S44: Popular songs back then. I don't remember.

¿??: They sang a lot of traditional folk songs.

S44: I remember I used to sing this one song that goes like this.... (SONG "La Tisica")

MHP: Would you like to go outside and look at some plants? We're going to go in a little while.

S43: When I go to the field trips with the group all of the people know how I am. Sometimes people don't like me even my own sister and my family. You can't satisfy

everybody not even in your own family. They don't like it but this is how I am. See she's a youngster and she likes me. Don't forget to go to the breakfast on the 12th at the college.

MHP: I'm leaving on Tuesday.

S43: Oh, what a shame.

MHP: Oh no it's not a shame, I'll be gone for three weeks.

S43: Of coarse it is a shame, you are one of the collaborators with Mr. Josie.

MHP: Well it's only for three weeks.

S43: May God accompany you and bring you back safely.

MHP: Thank you. I'm going to Notre Dame. I'm going to the Cathedral and I'll pray for you.

S43: Health is what we need primarily. In this country everything else is taken care of. You know the state helps one so that one doesn't have to go around bothering people. Come on over here sweetheart.

¿??: Be careful.

S43: Yes, I'll go down by myself because I have to do it very slowly. Pardon me with the Mr. since he doesn't know any Spanish.

MHP: Do we follow you?

S43: Sure, come on.

S44: This is good for the gums.

CH: What is the name of this plant?

S44: We do not know but it is well known.

MHP: In English it is called Jade.

¿??: Well let us call it Jade then.

S43: Yes, you can find that bush in many places.

S44: This is your common rosemary (**romero**).

¿??: That is called squirrel tail (*cola de ardilla*). I don't know if it has any medicinal value.

S43: This is called bougainvillea (*buganvilla*). The flower is good for treating throat infections. You boil it well after you wash it really well. You drink it as cough syrup.

S44: This is Aloe Vera. I replanted it and since it hasn't been doing very well.

S43: The linseed is doing very well. It's really pretty.

S44: Here is the spearmint (*hierba buena*).

S43: Spearmint is good for cooking too. For example, when you make ground meat (picadillo) you can add spearmint and lemon and it is very delicious.

CH: In the soup?

S43: No, in the meat.

S44: Spearmint.

S43: Aloe Vera is good for generating hair growth, for any kind of infection, and for asthma, and colds. It is very bitter. I can't drink it.

CH: Is this rue?

S44: Yes, it looks like it.

¿??: It's getting all full of weeds and I can't clean it anymore because of my arthritis.

S43: You took it all out?

¿??: Yes, auntie.

S43: Oh, that's too bad. I hadn't been here in a while.

¿??: I want to pave all that area. You want that? You can have it.

S43: Yes, it's beautiful. Look at this how beautiful. Dear you shouldn't pull this out, it's beautiful.

¿??: I have some out there. I have to take it out because I want to pave this area.

S44: This you wash well, grind and if you want you can boil it or not. You don't need to boil it. You make an infusion and you drink this. It is good for the kidneys. It is marvelous for the kidneys. These are things that we have learned from childhood. But in

fact these plants are very medicinal and our own personal use of these plants attests to this. We give it to people we know and it has given them very good results. We are already old but here we are standing thanks to the herbs we use to cure ourselves. Here, we have help. We have Medical. We are U.S. citizens and we have everything we need thanks to God. Back home we grew up in poverty and when you are poor you learn how to be practical and not waste money.

CH: When did you come to the U.S.?

S44: My sister has been here for 38 years and I've been here for 29 years, and my daughter has been here for 38 years also. We have started new roots here so I don't think we are leaving unless they kick us out.

S43: I give thanks to God because we have arrived in this country like sea gulls looking for summer, like the honeybees looking for a place to make honeycomb, like the birds that fly over and are happy. That is how those of us who have come to this country are. Thanks to the United States we can look after our families and ourselves. Thanks to God.

S44: We are now citizens of this country. We didn't come to this country to make havoc. Thanks to God we didn't come in illegally.

S43: Every time has been legal. I came in 4 times and 4 times I went back. I couldn't get a job because I was too old already. I was already 53 years old. Back then, a lot of people from Mexico would come to this country to work in other people's homes. They would make their small fortune and would go back home but not I. Nobody wanted me. But I did work for 4 years with a lady. When my son came he was employed as a Spanish teacher because she didn't want to let me go. Thanks to God I had a good opportunity even as an elder person. I worked for 4 years. I was able to help my niece and my niece's sons but I didn't learn English. Unfortunately, I was not able to learn English. She has gone to school but I never went to school. I can answer a few things, like if someone says hello to me, or how are you. I can answer, fine thank you and then I start walking forward so that I don't get asked any more questions because I can't answer everything else.

S44: I went to school and studied grammar as if I were starting as a small child. I should have taken an English class with not so much grammar and maybe then I would have learned English.

CH: But you speak it well.

S44: Well, yes fortunately. I learned a few things thanks to God. I wish I had learned a lot more. **Starts to speak in English:** "I went to school. I was in school attending all day. In the morning and night at 2:30 in the afternoon but I don't learn because my head don't help me. My head still does not help me."

CH: Well sometimes my head doesn't help me either. I forget everything.

S44: Sometimes I understand some words. I can say many words but the people talk to me and I don't understand very well. But it is better if I don't speak English. Spanish is better for me. As an elderly person it is very difficult to learn English. As a child I didn't get much schooling so I didn't learn a lot of things. I went to school for 3 or 4 years and was able to learn how to read and write. I can do it fairly well thanks to God. In order for me to pick up more English I needed to know more Spanish grammar but after I got sick I lost a lot of what I had learned. I was able to read and write in English. But I had a hard time understanding it when people would speak to me.

CH: It was difficult?

S44: It is very difficult. Really I depend a lot on my daughter, my grandchild and my great-grandchild, and my nieces. They all speak English. I'm the only one that doesn't speak English, and my sister of course.

S43: When I was a little girl I went to school up to the third grade. I was not able to finish the fourth grade because my father died and we moved to El Salvador, and I wasn't able to take my exam. I only did six months in the fourth grade. However, with the little that I was able to learn in three years I have been happy. I raised four children on my own without having to put up with a husband. He was not a very good husband and may he rest in peace. I have only two children now but I am happy because I have eleven grandchildren. I have five grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren, and two little ones that are on their way that will be my great-great grandchildren. I thank God and science because perhaps if we didn't have that help we would not be alive. I give thanks to this country and to the people that understand the humble person that is not mentally developed well enough to express his/her sorrows and his/her happiness. Right?

CH: Yes.

S43: Bless all of the Americans.

CH: What plant is that?

S43: It is a white geranium (*geranio blanco*).

CH: White geranium?

S43: Look, this is the flower.

CH: I had never seen it.

S43: Neither had I.

CH: It's interesting.

S43: Look how beautiful it is.

S44: That one is in the middle of that one.

S43: Go and see the leaf. The leaf is made up of two colors but the flower is all white.

CH: Does it have a medicinal value.

S43: Yes, geranium is good for the hair. When you wash your hair, you can use the geranium water as a hair rinse. I'm more familiar with the red one than the white one. Look at that green one.

CH: Ok.

S43: Look how beautiful the plant is. It is just one plant. It's a real beauty.

CH: It's really pretty.

S43: It's very good for the cranium. This green one might be really good too. The green flower turns white. Look how beautiful.

CH: What about (*pascua*)? What is it good for?

S43: Pascua is good for... Which one? No, that is not Pascua.

CH: This is not Pascua?

S43: No, no.

¿??: Yes, auntie it is Pascua but it is dying out.

S43: Really?

¿??: The one outside is in better shape. The white stuff is the plague and that is why it is dying. I don't really water it anymore because I want to do something else with this space.

S43: Look here, I want you to see God's nature. You see how it is red here and white here. It is the same plant. Look how beautiful – God's divine nature.

CH: Yes it is really pretty.

S43: The same happens in families. Sometimes some children are born with lighter skin than their parents and sometimes husbands will have their doubt. Sometimes the mother is light skinned but the husband is dark skinned and one might ask, why was the child born light skinned? Well the child inherits the mother's blood. I suffered a lot with my

husband because he was an alcoholic. Look at this. There is another plant over there with flowers. These flowers belong to this plant. Did you see?

CH: Ok.

S43: This is the meaning of God's divine nature. This is why in a family some are born tall and others are born short, white, or brown. Even if it is the same blood.

CH: Yes.

S43: This is why sometimes judgments are placed within a family. You can cut one but not the other. I'll cut this one.

CH: Do you live with your nieces?

S43: No, my sister and I live in one of the apartments on Grandview.

CH: You live together?

S43: Yes. Look there's a bunch here but you can't cut it.

CH: My grandmother also lives with her younger sister.

S43: Really?

CH: They live at my aunt's house.

S43: That's good. This is to show you one thing from another. Look.

CH: They are very aromatic. When you cut them...

S43: Yes, I told you so. The milky stuff is aromatic and that is what is good for the cranium. It fortifies the cranium. For example, there are some young people that lose their hair and they can cook some geranium, all of it, leaf and all, but the milk comes out of this part and not the leaf.

CH: So that is what you cook?

S43: Yes, not the stem but the thick part. I don't know what it is called.

CH: The inside part.

S43: Yes, it is like a person who has bone and inside the bone there is no blood, there is marrow.

CH: I don't know how to say marrow in Spanish. What other plants do you have here that have a medicinal value?

S43: Well I don't come here very often. But she knows more about that because she tells her daughter what to plant.

MHP: Is geranium good for the stomach?

S43: No, it is good for fortifying the cranium.

MHP: The scalp.

S43: You boil it and use it as rinsing water. The red one is the one you want to use. I hadn't seen this one before.

CH: It's pretty.

S43: Yes, isn't it beautiful?

¿??: Walk over to the side so that I can cut some of this for the lady.

S43: Yes.

MHP: She's going to throw this plant out.

S43: See how the same plant is made up of white and red and it is the same leaf.

S44: See how it grows. This was full of it but we have taken it out.

CH: It has grown a lot?

S44: Yes, we are going to pave this area.

CH: It smells really nice.

S44: Yes, it smells very good. You have to touch it and this releases the aroma.

CH: Yes.

S44: This tree grows a lot in Mexico. They call it (*mispero*). I don't remember what we call it but the leaf is very good for bringing down tension. When you are feeling suffocated and cannot find pleasure in anything you can cut a leaf off and boil it in water. You let it cool off and then drink this during the day instead of drinking regular water. This brings down tension and you feel more relaxed.

CH: Have you ever needed it?

S44: I once asked a friend of mine why she would drink this and she explained about this plant. I lived with her in her home for many years. She would attest to the positive effect of this water. In fact, I even noticed that sometimes when she was depressed, after drinking this water she would feel better, and we would talk and eat together. So I could see that it was effective. When tension rises then a person will feel suffocated. This is what I think because I myself do not suffer from problems of tension. From what people have told me I know that it makes people feel disheartened, and they do not feel like talking. Mispero water can either bring up or lower it. It's marvelous.

MHP: *Mispero*?

S44: Mispero. Mexican people call it mispero but I do not remember what we call it back home.

S43: Is she recording?

S44: Yes.

CH: You were telling me about (mispero).

S44: This is mispero.

S43: That is mispero?

S44: It is Mexican mispero.

S43: I didn't know that. No wonder – it's a good thing you have that plant.

S44: Sylvia planted some seed and look how pretty it is now. The gardener prunes it so it doesn't grow out too much.

CH: Here in the United States have you known people that have told you about medicinal plants?

S44: No.

S43: Well we have heard over conversations because lots of people will ask if we have such and such plant and they might say that it is good for something. The other day your aunt came by-that is your aunt right?

CH: Well, she is my friend.

S43: Oh that's good. Well once she gave a talk but really the place is more focused on going on trips and talking about who has gone or who is coming. This is why people are

not communing with humanity. There are people who are not interested in others and in their needs.

S44: Do you remember the song (las cortadoras) “the cutters?”
THEY BREAK INTO SONG

CH: It must have been great that you were able to work with him while he was still alive.

S43: Oh yes, we used to be part of his group.

S44: He taught us so many songs like “the poblanitas.”

S43: I can hardly remember it.
THEY BREAK INTO SONG

S43: How does that song start? I can’t remember anymore.

S44: I can’t remember but I have it written somewhere.
THEY BREAK INTO SONG

S43: Is it that one?

S44: No.
THEY CONTINUE SINGING

S43: That one is also from Pancho Lara. You will see it in the book. He taught us these songs with his guitar.

¿??: Whenever you want to come back, these doors will be open for you. If you need anything that can be helpful to your study please let us know.

S43: Yes, dear.

CH: Thank you.

S43: She is not as old as we are but she is very attentive. My niece is a very good person with a big heart.

MHP: They have to go now.

S43: Yes, we are leaving. Thank you dear.

*****END OF TAPE*****

